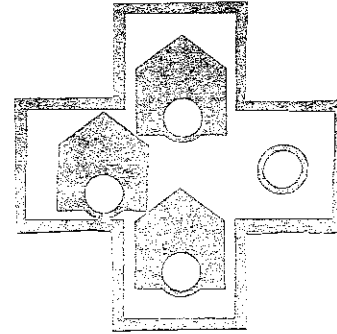

GENNESARET FREE CLINIC NEWS



Volunteer Health Care for the Homeless and Poor

Clinics at Dayspring Center, Care Center, Lighthouse Mission, Salvations Army Adult Rehab., Holy Family Shelter, Mt. Olive Crisis Center, and Mobile Unit. Office at 631 E. N. Y., Indpls, IN 46202; (317) 262-5645

January, 1992

"... And all those who touched Him were healed." Mark 6:58

Vol.5, No. 1

GFC Annual Meeting set for Feb 5

Our fourth year will come to a close and our fifth year will begin at our Annual GFC Meeting. This year it will be held at the Allison Mansion, Wednesday, February 5, from 6 to 8 pm. The meeting is an excellent time to "connect faces to names" and to renew friendships with other GFC volunteers. You will be amazed to see just how many Indianapolis health professionals are GFC volunteers. The Annual Meeting will be a time to honor special GFC volunteers and their accomplishments. There are so many wonderful things being done through GFC volunteer efforts that it would take all evening to recognize everyone however. During this meeting we will discuss previous GFC yearly goals and propose the 1992 goals for GFC. We will elect new Board of Directors for GFC and a word of encouragement is sure to be offered.

Our setting will be the Allison Mansion Conference Center on the grounds of Marian College. This marvelous meeting site was the 1991 Decorators' Showhouse and is said to be one of the finest homes in Indianapolis. What better way to use this facility than to honor those who volunteer their time to help the homeless. Come to see this magnificent home!

At our Annual Meeting, we hope to introduce the new GFC administrative assistant. This person, to be the first employee of GFC, will be ready to meet as many persons as possible so as to better assist you in providing care to those in need.

Please plan to attend, stop in after work on your way home for refreshments, bring your spouse or friend, and get GFC off to a good start on our fifth year.

GFC begins service at McCormick Center

As our fifth year is beginning, we will start providing medical care to McCormick Center on the Southwest side of Indianapolis. You may recall headlines from the disputes that have centered around this homeless shelter. Patricia McCormick, the founder and director of the McCormick Center, has been a lightning rod for controversy over this shelter for 40 adult males. She felt there was something she must personally do to prevent homelessness a few years ago. And so she started her own shelter! She directs the shelter, lives at the shelter, and invests most of her time, energy, and talents at the shelter. Numerous calls to the shelter always find her either present or away at shelter business. Unfortunately, the neighborhood has not received this angel of mercy kindly. This largely poor white neighborhood views the homeless men (many of minority background) suspiciously and has been vocal in opposition to

their presence. Tensions have run high with swastikas defacing shelter property, television coverage, and court hearings. The judge's ruling was for the shelter and neighborhood to work things out.

Into this situation, GFC has begun to bring medical care. The clients at McCormick Center are in need of medical care and are without funds to obtain any. Even though they are within 2 miles of Wishard Hospital, the clients are fearful to be walking the streets of this area for fear of attacks by angry residents. GFC will be supplying needed primary medical care and medication to these homeless persons. Also, GFC may be a calming influence in this conflict; GFC has offered to see indigent neighborhood persons for their medical needs as well. Hopefully, GFC can bring some peace into this troubled area by providing quality medical care to those in greatest need. Dr. and Mrs. James Szwed will bring the GFC mobile unit to the McCormick Center on Friday afternoons. McCormick Center will be the seventh shelter staffed by GFC teams.

Administrative Assistant to be hired by GFC

Using a de-centralized system of health care delivery sites has served the homeless of Indianapolis well. The sites are convenient, accessible, and small enough to retain a personal feeling. However, this system is much more difficult to administer. There is not one pharmacy, but seven mini-pharmacies and one central supply site. There is not one homeless shelter staff to interact with, but seven. Furthermore, laboratory and ancillary diagnostic studies and services cannot be practically deployed to seven sites.

In an attempt to address some of these problems, GFC will hire a full-time administrative assistant. This person will be stationed at our GFC office at the Indianapolis Medical Society and be available to assist with volunteer scheduling, patient referrals, inventory needs, administrative tasks, and volunteer needs. In general this person will be there to *coordinate* our de-centralized system of medical delivery.

We are looking for this person to have a strong commitment to the mission of GFC, to have excellent communication, secretarial, and computer skills, and to be a good representative of GFC. We intend to provide a just wage and benefits for this very important position. Interviews presently are being conducted with hiring to be by February 1. If you are interested or can suggest an appropriate person, please contact Donna O'Donnell, R.N. at 924-5444.

Medical Matters (submitted by Dr. Donald Trainor)

Now is the time to emphasize winter foot care for diabetics. Unfortunately, 90% of diabetics do not keep their disease under sufficient control to avoid complications involving the organs and the extremities. The feet of diabetics are especially vulnerable to cold weather because of impaired circulation and diabetic neuropathy. The most important step in caring for diabetic feet during the winter months is to protect them from the cold (an especially challenging task for the indigent diabetic). Precautions include limiting exposure and wearing properly fitting, well insulated, and dry footwear. Avoidance of creams, lotions, or oils between the toes which can retain moisture and predispose to infection is important. Never soak diabetic feet in hot water to warm them; diabetic neuropathy may allow for burn injury. Likewise, heating pads, hot water bottles, and putting feet near the fire should be avoided. Patients should be counseled to inspect feet daily and to report pressure areas, discoloration, inflammation, drainage, or very bad odor. Self care is easier when performed immediately after a bath at which time skin and nails are soft. Nails should be trimmed straight across. A pumice stone or file can help reduce a callus, but you need to clean the stone or file frequently with a stiff brush. Blades and acid plasters or home remedies often cause more harm than benefit.

Many thanks to contributors

December financial giving was up thanks to many who remembered GFC for their Christmas and Hanukkah giving. Below are those who contributed since the last newsletter:

Col. and Mrs Julius Culpepper, Jr., St John Church, Enochsburg; St. Anne Church, Hamburg; St. Maurice Church, Dec. Co.; Central Stainless Equip, Cummins Employees Combined Charities Fund, Wilma Cohee, Christian Theological Seminary Student Association, Dr. and Mrs. Barry Crevey, Dr. and Mrs Paul Schmidt, Dr. and Mrs. Phillip Kirlin, Dr. and Mrs. James Trippi, Dr. and Mrs. Kirk Parr, Dr. and Mrs. Richard Kovacs, Dr. and Mrs. William Storer, Dr. and Mrs. Russell Valentine, Dr. David Rardon, Dr. Karen Mahakian, Edward Lanston, Dr. and Mrs Henry Olivier, Phillip Price, and Dr. and Mrs. Bruce Schilt.

Please remember GFC during 1992; our financial need is greater than ever in our past and sources of funding are tight. If everyone gave according to their ability, we would be on solid footing. Thanks again.

News Items

The Shelter Health Fair succeeded by providing influenza vaccines, tuberculosis screening, and medical screening to many more than last year. Although the final head count is not in as we go to press, far more were seen during the daytime sessions than expected. The evening sessions also appeared to be well supported by shelter staff and clients.

During the tuberculosis screening, 24 patients were found to have positive ppds. Two patients were found to have communicable tuberculosis and inpatient therapy was begun. These were major health risks that were intercepted by the volunteers of the Shelter Health Fair. We have been advised that although the risk is small, any GFC volunteers from the Lighthouse Mission during the months of November and December should be skin tested for tuberculosis during the months of February and March.

CEO Magazine will feature GFC in their March 1992 issue.

The Shelter Health Fair was not without its troubles. Free hats, gloves, and socks were offered as an incentive to clients. Unfortunately, delivery was delayed and many clients and staff were disgruntled. Of interest, the firm supplying the clothing stated that they will try to donate their discontinued items rather than destroying them as they have been doing in the past now that the need is so apparent to them.

Our supplies of cold remedies were very low and money was too tight to order large quantities. As though sent from heaven, Mark Varnau of Hooks found numerous samples that were to be destroyed to help with our GFC shortage.

Several family teams now serve GFC. Husband and wife, parents and children, and siblings often come to GFC volunteer sessions to help together. It is an opportunity to work together and share in an experience that helps a family to grow closer. Consider bringing your child, spouse, or a good friend to help out next time you volunteer at GFC.

GFC Newsletter and Logo

Hopefully, the new format for this newsletter has kept you interested enough to read this far. We hope to "dress up" our communication in readability and content. If you would like to contribute articles or have suggestions, please contact Dr. Jim Trippi (who is enjoying his new computer very much) at 924-5444.

We are told over and over that GFC keeps too low a profile. Many people say they had no idea that health professionals volunteer to such a degree. We need to spread the word and enlist potential volunteers and donors. Try talking to a friend about your GFC experience. Use your GFC brochure to explain what we are about. A recent note states that rather than customary Christmas gifts, a donation to GFC was made in their name.

One ingredient in informing the public of our activities is our recognition factor. To this end, GFC has taken on a logo. Certainly the capitalized, italicized name (in Dutch SWA font) will be continued. That can be seen on our newsletterhead, stationery, and mobile van.

This newsletter features our new graphic logo as well. Designed by Talmadge Burdine of the Indiana State Board of Health for the Health Care for the Homeless and Poor Conference, this graphic will now represent both the conference and GFC. This abstract design represents aspects important to GFC. The symmetric cross border stands as an accepted medical symbol as seen in the American Red Cross logo. As a medical symbol, this cross has been a sign of aid on the battlefield, assistance at emergencies, and relief through transfusions. Indeed, it is a sign of lifegiving assistance. GFC volunteers may also read this as a representation of the spiritual element in our medical volunteering. Our faiths are often the most motivating and sustaining forces in our medical mission at GFC. Certainly, the cross symbolizes a Christian walk of faith, but this logo is in no way meant to exclude or offend our Jewish and Islamic GFC volunteers. Within the cross, are found three shelters (be they tents or homes) with those inside. And then there is the one without. Is it not this way in society also? Many with enough and a few without the basics of survival. Within the medical economic world is it not also true that most have insurance and receive excellent medical care whereas a minority are not able to enjoy these benefits?

Perhaps this logo will convey in an instant what we are about. If not, it may open an opportunity to explain what it means to you and what GFC is doing for the homeless and poor of Indianapolis.

Our deepest thanks to Tal Burdine for expressing so simply what is often hard to put into words.